

After care information for piercings

This document has been prepared to provide information on how to care for your piercing while it is healing. A hair salon or jewellery store may have provided you with this information if your ear lobe was pierced using a piercing gun. **Professional body piercers are required to provide you with more documentation on how to care for your specific piercing.** Professional body piercers will interview you prior to piercing to determine if you have any allergies, whether the piercing is appropriate, and answer any of your questions. These are only basic minimum requirements.

Never use a piercing gun for any part of the body other than the lobe of the ear.

1. **Always wash your hands thoroughly (immediately) before touching your jewellery or pierced area.**
2. Soak or rinse the pierced area in warm water to loosen any dried matter (from discharge of bodily fluid). Any crusted matter (dead white blood cells) is part of normal healing may be removed with soap and warm water. A clean swab may be used if necessary. Preferably, a liquid antibacterial soap should be used to clean the jewellery while turning or rotating it, so that the soap is worked into the piercing. **Rinse** under running water, if possible, while turning or rotating (showering is preferable to bathing). **Never** use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide on your piercing, and beware of hair sprays, heavily perfumed soaps, shampoos, etc.
3. **Never** touch a pierced area or jewellery without washing hands first. It may lead to an infection. Ensure clean clothing, linen, pillowcases, etc., are always used.
4. Other than normal bathing and showering, or when washing piercing, keep the pierced area dry. Avoid swimming pools, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, etc., until your piercing is completely healed.
5. **Never** touch, turn or move your jewellery when the wound is dry, only when wet (during cleaning). Beware of irritating the piercing (clothing, brushes, phones, etc.).
6. Do not over wash the piercing. Since your body does most of it's healing at night, twice a day is sufficient (morning and night). Three times a day at most if required.

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7. Do not closely cover wound (with a bandage, for example). Allow access to air.
8. A piercing may take from 1 to 6 months to heal and some may take as long as 1 year to heal completely (cartilage, for example). Your piercer will have more specific information on healing times. On average it takes 4 to 12 weeks, but depends on the area pierced, lifestyle factors and the individual's healing ability. Multi-vitamins and zinc supplements can also aid healing.
9. People heal differently. You may experience some itching, burning or tightness during healing. Tightness may remain after healing. Odours from secretions in the area of the new piercing are not uncommon. Bleeding, bruising, tenderness, discoloration and/or swelling are not uncommon, but prolonged soreness, excessive swelling or redness, or purulent discharge (pus) may indicate an infection. If these symptoms persist contact your piercer and consult your physician.

Never remove the jewellery from an apparently infected piercing. Contact your piercer and consult a physician. Removing your jewellery may lead to your hole(s) closing up, entrapping the infection, possibly resulting in an abscess.